NAQCC News

April 10, 2010	NAQCC Web Site	Issue #116

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1. APRIL SPRINT: Our regular monthly sprint is this Wednesday, April 14 at 0030-0230Z. If you're new to ham radio and unfamiliar with Z or UTC time, that's Tuesday evening at 8:30 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

We had a big downturn in participation in our March sprint for an unknown reason. Let's recover this month and get back on track continuing our record breaking performances we were having before the March slowdown. If you are hesitant to enter our sprints, don't be. They're 'user-friendly' to even the newest of ham radio ops. With the large bonus for use of a straight key, most participants use that device for the sprints. That helps to keep the speed down so newcomers to CW can copy most stations easily. We appreciate the many veteran CW contesters who enter our sprints and do keep their speed down even though they themselves are comfortable at 40 WPM or more in other contests. To borrow a stock phrase from the commercial world and apply it to our sprint, "Try it, you'll like it!" We're sure you will. You've told us that in the many wonderful soapbox comments that accompany the results from each sprint. If you still have doubts, just read some of them from the last few sprints.

For our sprint regulars who have been discouraged a bit by only 80M being really good for the sprints, remember that April is usually the month when 40M becomes very good for all of the USA and Canada. Also 20M should be useable for the next few months now in most of the country with the later sunsets.

Gosh, I'm getting excited now just writing about the sprint. Can't wait till time comes to start calling CQ NA.

Remember our special First-Timer certificate that goes to the highest scoring participant who never before submitted a log for one of our sprints. Also the prize of custom made bug/paddle

handles or straight key knobs that goes to the one chosen in a random drawing among ALL participants who submit a log regardless of score. KD2MX was the winner of the drawing in the March sprint. This prize giveaway will continue for the next 8 months now.

If you are entering one of our sprints for the first time, we welcome you and hope you will be a regular participant from now on. Last month for the first time in a very long while, we didn't have any first-time entrants. Hopefully we'll have a flock this month.

Remember this is only a very brief (well...) overview of the coming sprint. Be sure to read and understand the full general sprint rules and any specific rules for this month's sprints here.

2. MARCH CHALLENGE RESULTS: It looks like we put the word 'challenge' back into our challenges this month. It was hard for several members to make both WINTER and SPRING and you'll see in the results a lot of them could make only one of the words. Most commonly it was WINTER being the easy word. Personally I made WINTER from the first 6 QSO's I made in March. However I was never able to work anyone with a P or G in their name to make SPRING. Still we had a good participation in the challenge. This newsletter is being published just before the deadline for reporting results to us, but so far we have received 13 reports. 7 of those made both words, 5 made only WINTER, 2 made only SPRING. All who made both words will get a certificate. All 13 who sent in a report get a participation point and web listing. Complete results including any last minute reports can be found in a couple days in the Challenges section of the web site.

As always, full challenge info and results can be found here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS: - We're still looking for entrants in our banner contest. Check the previous few newsletters for info on the contest.

- We are continuing to get prizes donated to the club to be awarded to members in various ways. Mike KC2EGL handles all the details of the prizes and as he processes the info and sends it to me, I post it on the web site on the Prizes page.

We appreciate the generosity of our prize donors very much. It's nice to be able to award these items to our members to show in turn our appreciation to them for being an active participant in club events. If a club is to have a meaningful purpose, its members need to be active in club affairs in one way or another. While far from a majority, we are proud that we do have a good-sized percentage of our members that do take part in our sprints, challenges, awards, net, elmer program, and in other ways as well.

For full details of our prizes, see here.

- One of our prizes is 100 NAQCC QSL cards donated by the Cheap QSL's company. Don't let the name fool you. These are NOT cheap looking QSL's. Cheap refers only to the price of the cards. You win this prize simply by reading each of our newsletters thoroughly. Hidden somewhere is the call sign of a member. If that member finds his/her call and notifies us before the next newsletter is published via **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**, Mike will make the arrangements for them to get their free QSL's. So far we've had 5 winners (KD1R, KM6NN, K4UK, K5RIX, N9AKF) among the 21 members who've had their calls in the newsletters since we started the feature in issue #94. The hidden call is in a very out of context place and consists of a mix of upper and lower case letters to distinguish it from other callsigns which are always all upper case letters.

Deadline for this issue is April 23. Remember it must be the person who owns the callsign. If it's not yours and you find it all you get is a well-done, no QSL's.

Instead of waiting to see if you're a winner, we urge you to purchase a batch of these QSL's via the link above. You'll be proud to send them out to the folks you work and help publicize the club as well.

3a. WEB SITE TOUR: - We are reminded by questions from our members that they often do not really explore the web site since their complete answers could have been found there. For those who may read the newsletters, but haven't explored the site, we're including this feature in the newsletter to explain just what can be found on the site. Each issue we'll examine a different section of the site.

Contests/Sprints explains in great detail our monthly sprints. On the main page of that section is a link to the rules for the upcoming sprint, the most recent sprint, and the sprints for the next several months. In the navigation panel on the left side of the page are links to the other pages in the section as described here.

Autologger takes you to a page where you link to the autologger for entering your report on the just completed sprint. All you need do there is fill in the blanks to submit your report. It's extremely simple and takes only a few minutes at most to enter the info.

Results lists the complete results of every one of our sprints since their inception back in October 2004.

General Rules is a complete and thorough listing of every rule that applies to each of our sprints. This should be read and thorougly understood by everyone who enters one of our sprints. If a rule applies only to a certain sprint, that rule supercedes anything in the general rules and can be found in the rules for that specific sprint.

Print a Schedule allows you to easily print a list of dates and times for our sprint to post somewhere prominently so you won't forget to enter a single sprint.

Sprint Tips is a page that can make you a much better sprinter if you read all the tips from someone who has entered well over 900 contests and sprints in his ham career.

4. FEATURED AWARD OF THE MONTH: - Our most popular award by leaps and bounds is our 1000 MPW award. Its popularity probably comes from the ease of earning it. It doesn't require much thinking or record-keeping as other awards sometimes do. That seems to appeal to folks in today's society.

All you need to do to earn it is to work someone more than 5,000 miles distant using 5 watts, someone more than 1,000 miles away with 1 watt, or anyone where the distance divided by power in watts is more than 1,000. That's it except for submitting the info to our Awards Manager AA4W so he can send out your certificate and notify me (K3WWP) to list you on the Awards Winners page on the web site.

So far as of the date of this newsletter, we've issued 74 certificates to members from 6 countries - W, VE, HB9, JA, G, UA1.

Full NAQCC Awards info here.

5. THE NAQCC ELMER PROJECT:

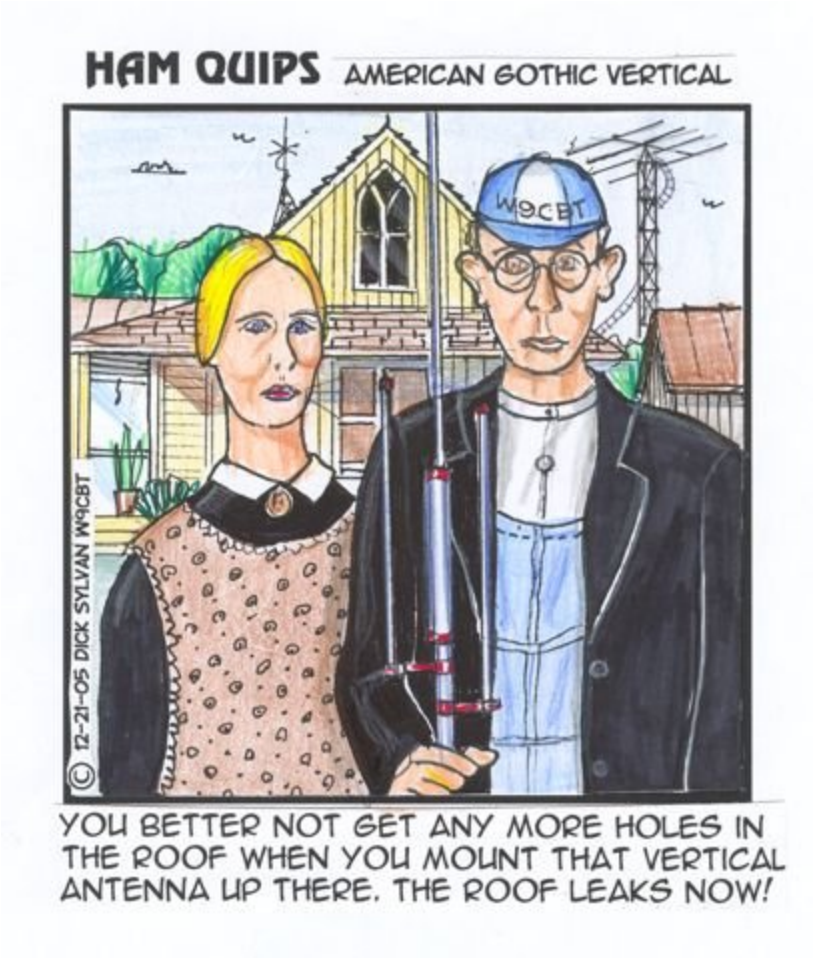
The Elmer project is co-ordinated by Karl N3IJR (L) and Ron K5DUZ. If you are interested in helping out or need help with any CW and/or QRP matters contact:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**
N3IJR - pix, email, n3ijr (1K)

The NAQCC QRS Net convenes each Monday at 0130Z when Standard time is in effect and 0030Z during Daylight savings time (Sunday evening at 8:30PM here in the USA Eastern time zone). From April through October, the frequency is 7118 kHz and from November through March it's 3575 kHz. Everyone is invited to check in for some hands-on CW teaching and learning. QRO is permitted for this one NAQCC activity since learning CW is so important and it may be difficult for newcomers to copy weaker signals amidst QRM or QRN. NCS (Net Control Station) is Karl using the club call of N3AQC.

See Elmer Project on the web site for a summary of net procedure and much more info on other matters to help those who may need it.

6. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH:

Let's take a comedy and/or nostalgia break now courtesy of Dick Sylvan W9CBT. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a cartoon artist, and he is supplying a cartoon each month for the newsletter. The NAQCC is very honored to be one of just two organizations to feature Dick's cartoons. In addition to our newsletter, Dick's cartoons appear monthly in The K9YA Telegraph, an on-line only Ham Radio E-zine where he is the staff cartoonist. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via his web site. A new cartoon will be appearing in each of our even-numbered newsletters.


HAM QUIPS AMERICAN GOTHIC VERTICAL
W9CBT
© 12-21-05 DICK SYLVAN W9CBT
YOU BETTER NOT GET ANY MORE HOLES IN THE ROOF WHEN YOU MOUNT THAT VERTICAL ANTENNA UP THERE. THE ROOF LEAKS NOW!

QRP QRP

7. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

This section is managed by Paul N8XMS and any questions about it should go to PAUL142857@GMAIL.COM. Paul selects members at random and asks them if they would like to be featured in the Member Spotlight in the newsletter.

Bill Kirby VO1BB #1958

I have been licensed since 1997. I have my Basic,CW and Advanced licences. I am a R.A.C Certified Emergency Coordinator and just recently joined ARES. Also I a member of RAC, ARCI,The Flying Pigs, and the SKCC.

My main interests are in QRP cw and ssb dxing. During the summer I try to operate portable as much as I can with my dog Elmo. I like to send and receive qsl cards. Its nice to get cards from all over the world. My kids also like reading them and looking at the different pictures.

My station is made up of Heathkit, Icom,Kenwood,Ten Tec and Elecraft radios. My main rig in the house is a ts 130v and straight key. And for portable work it would be my KX1. Both are very nice rigs to use.

I have been using mostly dipoles at low heights between 15 and 30 ft. They are simple but work very well for me.

This year I plan on operating on 6 meter along with hf. Also I am hoping to do some home brewing and trying out qrpp levels. This should be fun.

I hope to hear you on the bands this year.

73 Bill

8. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS:

This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window.

(disclaimer) Any views expressed here are those of the member submitting them, and may not

be in agreement with those of the NAQCC.

- **From John K3WWP #0002** - What a delight it is to see conditions improving on the ham bands as the Sun becomes active again and fires up the ionosphere. Although all the club work I do plus other activities leaves precious little time to actually get on the air, it's nice that when I do get on I can generally count on making some easy QSO's even on the higher bands.

Recently I've worked quite a bit of DX including 3 very easy QSO's with Poland on 40M in the SP DX contest. I've told of other DX in previous newsletters and in my web site diary so I won't repeat that here. I just wanted to let everyone know that they can come out of hiding now and get on the bands with a promise of having much more to choose from than during the dark dismal days of the sunspot minimum. Actually it wasn't all that dismal, it's just that folks believed it was, and avoided the bands for other activities.

I had no trouble at all keeping my streak of at least one QRP/CW/simple-wire-antenna QSO's a day going all through the minimum. With the reduced activity on the bands, some days took a little longer to get the QSO, but I never came close to missing a day.

See YOU on the bands? I hope so.

- **From Skip N2EI #3317 -** Many of you know that, some time back, I authored a book called "Radio Monitoring - A How To Guide". Originally published by Index Publishing Group and later released by Paladin Press, is had two very successful editions that sold for many years. This book has recently gone out of print but I am pleased to say that I have now released it on line (for FREE) via Creative Commons license. I admit that a few points are a bit dated but the book still has a lot to offer the beginner or even experienced radio hobbyist. You can download a copy thanks to the North American Shortwave Association (NASWA) who have consented to be the primary online source for distribution. The direct link is here. The hobby has been good to me over the years. I am happy to give this book back to the radio community. Enjoy.

- **From Terry KE5YUM #3102 -** The April WARC band challenge looks exciting and I hope to work as many members as possible on 30 meters. I've enclosed a photo of my 30-meter QRP rig. My current antenna is an inverted-V at 30 feet which I operate without a tuner. The DX performance is (for me) amazing.

- **From Dave VA3RJ #0004 -** I know a few of the recent NAQCC newbies are noteable hams, but #4349 is very influential as she is the Chief Coordinator of the National Institute of Amateur Radio (NIAR). She recently presented testimony on the eve of Commonwealth Observance Day and met Queen Elizabeth at the event. Read the full story at: #4349 VU2RBI meets the

Queen!

- **From John N6HI #642 -** If any of my fellow QRPers have not checked out 17-meters lately, I most highly suggest you give it a try! So far this month, using just an end-fed 20-foot hunk of wire thrown into a tree out my window, I have worked 31 Countries with 5 Watts or less ... 12 of them were worked with 1/2 Watt. 17-meters has been great this month, providing some excellent openings to Europe. 17-meters even provided me a QRP contact with a "rare" island: Diego Garcia Island in the Chagos Islands, which are almost exactly on the opposite side of the world from my QTH in Arizona! Solar activity is picking up, and 17-meters is HOT ... give it a try!

- **From Paul N8XMS #675 -** My wife and I recently spent the weekend in Columbus, OH visiting our daughter. She is a graduate student at OSU. Knowing that the ladies often like to go shopping, I took along my travel rig, an Elecraft KX1, just in case I had to kill some time while they went out. (Oh, the sacrifices that we sometimes must make!) My daughter has a small 3rd-floor apartment and I was able to deploy my 40-ft random wire antenna out a window and over a nearby tree. A 16-ft counterpoise wire hung down from the window, and another 16-ft counterpoise was laid out on her living room floor, but not to its full length. The built-in tuner on the KX1 gave me good matches on 20, 30, and 40 meters. My batteries were not very fresh but I had between 2.5 and 3 watts of output on all bands. Over a couple of hours I was able to enjoy eight solid contacts spread out over all three bands. I worked IL, OH, NY, NM, CT, and NC. Especially fun was my 40-meter contact with W4EQ in NC who was running only 200 mW.

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless they specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.